

## **CLAIMS**

1. A network comprising a plurality of contact centers each contact center comprising:

- (i) a contact object memory storing a plurality of contact objects each representing a different contact in the network of contact centers; and
- (ii) an agent object memory storing a plurality of agent objects each representing a different agent in the network of contact centers;

said contact objects and agent objects being replicated and synchronized at each of the contact centers.

2. A network as claimed in claim 1 wherein each of said contact centers is arranged to receive incoming contacts directly at that contact center.

3. A network as claimed in claim 1 wherein at least one of said contact centers is arranged to operate in a first mode and a second mode; whereby in said first mode at least some incoming contacts received directly at that contact center are serviced only by said contact center; and whereby in said second mode at least some incoming contacts received directly at that contact center are serviced at any suitable contact center in the network.

4. A network as claimed in claim 1 wherein each of the contact centers further comprises a processor arranged to access the contact objects and the agent objects stored at that contact center in order to allocate a contact to the most suitable agent network-wide.

5. A network as claimed in claim 1 wherein said most suitable agent network-wide is a network longest-idle agent.

6. A network as claimed in claim 1 wherein each of the contact centers further comprises a processor arranged to access the contact objects and the agent objects stored at that contact center such that when an agent becomes

available at that contact center a contact is selected for that agent network-wide.

7. A contact center for use in a network of contact centers, said contact center comprising:

- (i) a contact object memory storing a plurality of contact objects each representing a different contact in the network of contact centers; and
- (ii) an agent object memory storing a plurality of agent objects each representing a different agent in the network of contact centers;
- (iii) said contact objects and agent objects being replicated and synchronized with those at each of the other contact centers.

8. A method of managing a contact in a network of contact centers said method comprising:

- (i) at a first contact center in the network storing a plurality of contact objects each representing a different contact in the network of contact centers; and
- (ii) at said first contact center storing a plurality of agent objects each representing a different agent in the network of contact centers; and
- (iii) replicating and synchronizing said contact objects and agent objects at each of the contact centers in the network.

9. A method as claimed in claim 8 which further comprises receiving an incoming contact directly at any of said contact centers in the network.

10. A method as claimed in claim 8 which comprises operating said first contact center in a first mode and a second mode; whereby in said first mode at least some incoming contacts received directly at that contact center are serviced only by said contact center; and whereby in said second mode at

least some incoming contacts received directly at that contact center are serviced at any suitable contact center in the network.

5 11. A method as claimed in claim 8 which further comprises using a processor at any of the contact centers to access the contact objects and the agent objects stored at that contact center in order to allocate a contact to the most suitable agent network-wide

10 12. A method as claimed in claim 8 which further comprises using a processor at any of the contact centers to access the contact objects and the agent objects stored at that contact center such that when an agent becomes available at that contact center a contact is selected for that agent network-wide.

13. A method of operating a contact center in a network of contact centers, said method comprising the steps of: ✓

- 15 (i) at said contact center storing a plurality of contact objects each representing a different contact in the network of contact centers;
- (ii) at said contact center storing a plurality of agent objects each representing a different agent in the network of contact centers;
- (iii) said contact objects and agent objects being replicated and synchronized with those at each of the other contact centers.

20 14. A computer program arranged to carry out the method of claim 8.

15. A computer program arranged to carry out the method of claim 13.